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"Well," said Pat, "I was in last night at old Ned Flanagan's, and there was a deal of people in it, and there was Tim Reilly, the priest's schoolmaster; and they were all talking about the old religion and the new religion; and Tim Reilly was holding out that the Church of Rome had the old religion; and others was asking wasn't there things changed in it, and then how could it be the old religion? and at first Tim Reilly wouldn't give in that that there was anything changed; but there was old Ned Flanagan, that gets a newspaper, called the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, and he had a deal of learning out of it; and, indeed, he promised me the reading when he had done it. So, says he to Tim, 'Is the Immaculate Conception an article of the Catholic faith?' says he. 'It is,' said Tim; 'didn't you hear the priest read the Pope's decree in the chapel?' 'And how could St. Bernard be a saint when he denied it?' said Ned. 'It wasn't an article of the faith then,' said Tim, 'for the Pope hadn't settled it.' 'Well,' says I, 'sure that's a new piece put on it anyway; and how can it be the old religion after that?'"

"Well, with that he turns round to me, for he's a mighty cute little fellow that would bother anybody, and says he, 'how long have you the old coat?' says he. 'It's turning the talk, you are,' says I. 'It's not,' says he; 'it's coming to it I am: how long have you the old coat?' says he again. Well, they all allowed me to answer him: so, says I, 'it's eight years any way, and may be a bit more. 'And mighty well mended it is,' says he, 'for the time. Now, do you mean to tell me,' says he, 'that you bought that coat eight years ago?' says he. 'Deed and I do,' says I. 'That very coat?' says he. 'This very coat,' says I. So he put his hand on my shoulder, and says he, 'was this patch on when you got it?' says he. 'No,' says I. 'Nor none of the patches?' says he. 'Not one of them,' says I. 'And it's the same coat for all that,' says he.

"Well, I seen then what he was at; and when I came to think of it, it wasn't easy to think it *was* the same coat, when there was hardly a bit of the first coat left in it. 'Well, I think it's hardly the same, after all,' says I. 'Well, boys,' says he, 'did you ever hear the like of that? didn't he say this minute it was the very coat?'"

"Well, they were all down on me then; and I tried to make the best hand I could of it; 'for sure,' says I, 'it isn't like it, for it was a blue coat when I got it, and I leave it to yourselves, boys, if you can find one bit of the blue cloth in it now.' Well, with that, the boys all began discussing if it was the same coat or not; and some allowed that as long as I took it off at night, and put it on in the morning, it was surely the same coat; and more of them allowed it was the cloth made the coat; and when the same cloth wasn't in it, how could it be the same coat? Well, when they were all done talking, says Tim to me—'Is it the same coat,' says he, 'or is it not?' 'Well, I think it's not,' says I. 'And when did it turn into another coat?' says he; 'was it when the first patch was put on it?' says he. 'No,' says I, 'it wasn't, sure enough.' 'And was it the second patch, or the third patch, or the fourth patch, or what patch,' says he, 'that turned it into another coat?' says he. Well, with that they all began again, and now they were all for allowing that it *was* the same coat. Well, Ned Flanagan's byre is down, and so he had the cow in the corner. So I turns to Ned, and says I, 'that's a pretty little calf,' says I. 'It's no calf,' says Ned, 'it's a cow giving milk, with a calf of her own.' 'Don't be joking,' says I, 'it's a calf.' 'It's joking you are,' says he. 'Was it ever a calf?' says I. 'It was,' says he. 'What day did it turn into a cow?' says I; 'was it a Sunday or a week-day? Here's a learned man,' says I, pointing to Tim, 'that will prove to you, that it's a calf still, if you can't tell the day it changed.' Well, with that they all allowed the day couldn't be told, and still the calf had turned into a cow.

"And, says I, 'isn't it the same with the corn that grows—who can tell the day the ear is formed? and isn't it the way with spring and summer? and with child and man? and isn't it the way with day and night? and where's the good,' says I, 'of the priest telling us our religion must be the same now that it was at first, just because no one can tell what day it changed from one religion to another; and wouldn't just the same argument prove,' says I, 'that night was day, or day night? But who would be the fool to believe it against his own eyesight,' says I, 'and where's the good of argument that's as fit to prove that black is white, as to prove anything else?' says I.

"Well, with that they all fell to talking, and they allowed that things does change, in a way that no one can tell when they changed, and that there is no use denying it.

"Well, I was considering with myself that when a thing is said sharp and clever about one thing being like another, people, maybe, is apt to take it up mighty quick, and think it very learned, without stopping to consider how far one thing is like another; so, thinks I to myself, *would* the religion of Jesus Christ be like an old coat at all?"

"So I turns to Tim Reilly, and, says I, 'after all there's a differ between the coat getting old, and the calf turning into the cow, and I give in to you entirely that it's the very same coat I bought eight years ago.'

"To be sure there's a differ," says he, 'between a thing getting old, and one thing turning into another, and that's what I was going to say when you would be done talking,' says he; so, then, he went on to talk a deal about the old

coat being the same, with all its patches; and just the same way, he allowed, when the Pope made new decrees and new articles of faith, his religion was still the same religion, and the old religion, for all that.

"So I waited till he was done; and then says I, 'And do you mean to tell me,' says I, 'that the religion of Jesus Christ is made up of patches and mendings, like an old coat? You're right so far, any way,' says I, 'that your religion is old enough, like the old coat,' says I; 'it's as old as being patched and mended, and threadbare and darned, and in rags and holes, and tossed and turned, can make it; but you'll never get the holes out of an old coat by turning it,' says I; 'and isn't it enough for me to have my old coat made of rags and patches without having my religion made of them too,' says I; 'and isn't that the way with all them that tries to patch up a religion of their own merits instead of the merits of Christ; for doesn't the Bible say that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags?"' And why do I get patches on the old coat?' says I. 'Isn't it because it is wearing out and going to the bad? And can that be the way with the religion that God made? Doesn't the Bible say that the heavens and earth will wear out like an old coat, but that God keeps still the self-same ever more?' And won't his religion keep the same? "for the Word of the Lord endureth for ever;" so I leave you the old coat for your religion,' says I; 'but it won't fit the religion of Christ; for there never was a coat,' says I, 'but *the one*, that could be fitting for the religion of Christ.'

"Well, with that they all began tearing at me to tell what coat that was; and I made them guess for it, and of all the guesses ever you heard they were the queerest; one allowed it was what the priest says mass in; another said it was what the nuns wear on their heads; another said it was the red strip that some of the priests wear over their shoulder; one old woman said it be to be the scapular; another said it was the blue cloak that's on the picture of the Virgin Mary in the chapel; and another allowed that it be to be something that was on the Pope: but they could make no hand of it, till old Ned Flanagan, that reads his Bible, says, 'Why, then, wasn't it the coat of Christ himself, that was "without seam, woven from the top throughout."?' "That's the hit," says I; 'would there be seams and patches in the religion of Christ, any more than on his coat?' So with that, for it was getting late, says I to Tim Reilly, 'I'll just take myself off with my old coat,' says I; 'and may you get the religion without seams or patches, afore I get a new coat.' So they all bid me the good night kindly, and maybe they will think of the coat."

"Well Pat," said Jem, "you done it well: and deed I didn't know there was much good to be got in an old coat, and when times mend, and you get a new one, I hope it will serve you as well."

We hope so, too, and we hope the state of poor Pat's coat will remind some rich people how much the poor want some warm clothing in this cold weather, when the most a poor man's wages can do, is to get a little meal at a dear price, and maybe little enough of that. May God stir up the hearts of us all to remember how "the religion without seam," teaches us to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have again to apologize to several of our friends for postponing their communications. Letters from Mr. E. Power and others are in type, and omitted from want of room.

We beg to call the attention of our correspondents to the utility of adding their name and address to their communications.

To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st. Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal, which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

THE Publishers respectfully request their Subscribers to remember, that their subscriptions are payable in *advance*. When the friends of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN are informed, that at this moment above 1,000 sums of 3s. 6d. each are due to the publisher, it is hoped that those in arrear will be good enough to remit or pay the amount due, without the necessity of special applications. Where the annual sum is so small, it is impossible to make applications in the usual manner, without incurring a serious expense in proportion to the sum due. Mr. Curry will, therefore, feel greatly obliged by remittances.

* Isaiah lxi. 6, and compare Romans x. 3.

† Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth: and the works of thy hands are the heavens.

They shall perish, but Thou shalt continue: and they shall all grow old as a garment.

And as a vesture shalt Thou change them: and they shall be changed: but Thou art the self-same, and Thy years shall not fail.—Hebrews i. 10, 11, 12, and Psalm ci. 26, 27, 28, Douay Bible; Psalm ci. 26, 27 in the Protestant Bible.

‡ 1 Peter i. 25, Douay Bible.

§ Gospel of St. John, xix. 23.

The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, FEBRUARY, 1855.

WE have now before us the Letter Apostolic of the Pope on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. This decree was pronounced on the 8th of December, and is published in the *Univers* of the 20th January, and in the *Tablet* of January 27. The decree is, of course, in Latin; but the *Tablet* also gives a translation, which we shall make use of in preference to any of our own.

Such a document, of course, demands our consideration, and we desire to call the attention of our readers to it.

The first sentence that requires our notice is one near the end of the first clause or paragraph of the decree, in which our Lord is spoken of as "by nature one and the same common son of God the Father, and of the Virgin."*

This savours very strongly of the ancient Eutychian† heresy, which admitted only *one nature* in Christ. We hold, with the Catholic Church of all ages, that He who was born of Mary was truly God. We hold, also, that He was truly man. We hold with the Catholic creed of St. Athanasius, that he was "God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world." We hold that these two natures remained distinct and unmixed in Him. "Perfect God, and perfect man." That He was "equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood." And yet that he was "one Christ," "not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person." All this our readers may see in the Athanasian Creed.

As respects his divine nature, he is the Son of God. As respects his human nature, he is the Son of Mary. And, *by the unity of His person*, he is the common son of both. To say that He is the common son of both by nature, whereas he is, in fact, the son of each in respect of *separate* natures, is the heresy of the Eutychians.

How the Pope fell into this error is plain enough. His object is to magnify Mary. If Mary was the mother of Jesus only by reason of his human nature, the Pope's object fails. But if Jesus was the common Son of God and of Mary, in respect of the *same nature*, then is she raised to the throne of God.

We ask our readers to consider how the new doctrine has led the Pope himself to confound the two natures of Christ, which the Catholic Church has always kept so distinct in her creed.

The Pope goes on to affirm, with the confidence that becomes a Pope, that the Church "HAS NEVER CEASED to lay down, to cherish, and to illustrate continually, by numerous proofs," the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

But, unfortunately for his assertion, the Pope tries to support it by proofs; and here is the earliest proof which he is able to produce—"For this doctrine . . . the Church herself has most clearly pointed out, when she did not hesitate to propose the Conception of the same Virgin for the public devotion and veneration of the faithful. By which illustrious act she pointed out the Conception of the Virgin as singular, wonderful, and very far removed from the origins of the rest of mankind; and to be venerated as entirely holy, since the Church celebrates festival days only of the saints." So the earliest act of his Church, which the Pope can point to

* "Ut naturaliter esset unus idemque communis Dei Patris, et Virginis filius."

† The followers of Eutyches denied that the two natures of God and man remained distinct and separate in Christ. The Fourth General Council of Chalcedon was called to condemn this error, and pronounced that both natures remained in Christ, each perfect and distinct from the other.

as laying down the Immaculate Conception, is the institution of the feast and office of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

Now, when was this feast instituted? St. Bernard, "the last of the Fathers," will tell us. Writing, in the TWELFTH century, to the clergy of Lyons, who had then begun to introduce such a feast, he says—"We can never enough wonder that some of you could have the boldness to introduce a feast which the Church has not the least knowledge of, which neither is supported by reason, nor backed by any tradition."* This is conclusive proof that the Church of Rome had no such feast in the twelfth century. The Church of Rome adopted it in the thirteenth century at the earliest; and this is the most ancient act of the Church of Rome which the Pope can find to support his confident assertion, that the Church of Rome "has never ceased to lay down" this doctrine! Never ceased! But when did she begin? Why the Pope's own proof makes it plain that she BEGAN then to lay it down in the thirteenth century, at the earliest.

The Pope proceeds to confess a fact, which will probably prejudice many Christians against the doctrine he tries to support—"And, therefore, the very words in which the sacred Scriptures speak of uncreated Wisdom, and represent His eternal origin, she (the Church of Rome) has been accustomed to use, not only in the offices of the Church, but also in the holy Liturgy, and TO TRANSFER to the origin of that Virgin." That "uncreated Wisdom" is Christ, who is "the wisdom of God;" and what the Scripture says of His origin, the Church of Rome TRANSFERS to the origin of Mary! But why has the Church to do so? Is it not because the Scriptures does not attribute an immaculate origin to the Virgin? So the Church has to borrow from Christ, to lend to Mary; and when did the Church begin to do this? Was it before the thirteenth century?

The Pope then goes on to lay down a very important principle respecting the prayers which are appointed to be read in the Church of Rome. Whatever is prayed for in those offices, becomes thereby an article of faith! Thus, speaking of the Litany of Loretto, and other such prayers to the Virgin, he says—"Thus the rule of faith would be established by the rule of supplication itself." We must not forget this, when we have to speak of the Litany of Loretto in future.

Having thus spoken of the public acts of the Church, which the Pope cannot trace farther back than the thirteenth century at the farthest, he goes on to speak of the public acts of former Popes in favour of the Immaculate Conception.

And here the "object" of this devotion, as defined by the Popes, does seem to us strange. "Our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, increasing with all their care the devotion of the Conception, studied most especially to declare and inculcate its OBJECT and doctrine: for they taught clearly and openly that the festival was celebrated for the Conception of the Virgin; and they proscribed as false and most foreign to the intention of the Church, the opinion of those who considered and affirmed that it was not the conception itself, but the sanctification, to which devotion was paid by the Church."

Our predecessors themselves thought it their duty to protect and defend, with all zeal, both the Feast of the Conception of the most Blessed Virgin, and the Conception from the first instant AS THE TRUE OBJECT OF DEVOTION." We ask, now, do Roman Catholics really pay THEIR DEVOTION to that act, by which the Virgin Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother!! What else is the meaning of saying that "the Conception" is "the true object of devotion?"

Well may we say now, with Saint Bernard—"How can it be maintained that a conception

which proceeds not from the Holy Ghost, but rather from sin, can be holy?"

But when did POPES first begin to set up the Conception as the "true object of devotion?"

The present decree gives the names of the Popes who did so, and we have only to ascertain their dates.

The first whom the present Pope can mention as having done so is Pope Sixtus IV., and the next Pope, Alexander VII. Pope Sixtus IV. obtained the Papacy in 1471, and Pope Alexander VII. in 1655! and these are the earliest Popes who can be shown to have set up the Conception as an object of devotion.

The Pope in his decree does mention Sixtus IV., but wisely refrains from quoting him. This was prudently done, as becomes an infallible Pope. For the object was to get men to believe that a Pope sanctioning a service for the feast of the Conception was, in fact, a decision of the Church of Rome in favour of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception; and to have quoted Sixtus IV. would have spoiled this idea entirely. For that very decree* of Pope Sixtus IV. which speaks of the service for the Conception—"When the Holy Roman Church publicly and solemnly celebrates the feast of the Conception of the undefiled and ever Virgin Mary, and has ordained a special and proper office for it,† that very decree does also prohibit any one from condemning those who deny the Immaculate Conception, on this very ground, "because the question has not yet been decided by the Roman Church and the Apostolic See."‡ So the very Pope who instituted the office of the Immaculate Conception, did proclaim that the question was not settled by that office; and yet the present Pope, in his decree, appeals to that office as a decision on the question by the Pope who authorized that office!

Of course, the Pope can do no better, in his decree, when he has no better proofs to produce. But it was wisely done only to refer to Pope Sixtus IV., and NOT to quote his decree!

The first of his predecessors whom the present Pope ventures to quote on the subject in his decree, is Pope Alexander VII. Pope Pius IX. does not in his decree tell us in what age Alexander lived.§ So the readers of the decree, in English, may imagine, if they like, that Pope Alexander lived "long, long ago." But, on turning to the list of the Popes in Labbe and Cossart, we find that Alexander VII. succeeded to the Papacy in 1655, just two hundred years ago. And this is the first Pope who can be quoted in support of the assertion, that the Church of Rome "has never ceased to lay down" the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception!

The passage quoted in the decree from Pope Alexander VII. is, indeed, most worthy of attention, for it throws light on an important subject—viz., the precise period at which the Church of Rome began to celebrate, by authority, the festival of the Immaculate Conception. This is Pope Alexander's evidence—"Considering that the Holy Roman Church solemnly celebrates the festival of the Conception of the Immaculate and ever Blessed Virgin, and has appointed for this a special and proper office, according to the pious, devout, and laudable institution WHICH EMANATED from our predecessor, Sixtus IV."

So the "Office of the Conception" is an institution of Pope Sixtus IV. It emanated from him. Now, Pope Sixtus IV. succeeded to the Papacy in the year 1471. So it was not until the fifteenth

* Ex Lib. III., Extravagantium Communium Tit. de reliquiis et veneratione Sanctorum. c. 2.

† Cum Sancta Romana Ecclesia de intermatate semperque Virginis Mariæ Conceptione publice festum solemniter celebraret, et speciale ac proprium super hoc officium ordinaverit.

‡ Cum nondum sit a Romana Ecclesia et Apostolica Sede decisum.

§ There is, however, appended to the original Latin copy a note which gives the date—Alexander VII., Const. Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum, VIII. Decembris, 1661."

century that the prayers on which the present Pope now lays such stress in his decree were authorized at all by a Pope in the Church of Rome.

We have spoken above as if that office might have commenced in the thirteenth century. We did so in compliance with a common opinion, founded, we believe, on an expression in the 36th Session of the Council of Basil.* But that Council is condemned and rejected by the Church of Rome. And here, in the present Pope's decree, we have the first genuine authority for the institution of the office of the Conception, near the end of the fifteenth century.

Pope Alexander VII. goes on to say, that the reverence shown to this "piety, devotion, and festival," has "never changed in the Roman Church since the institution of the worship itself." Now we know what Pope Pius meant when he said, in the beginning of his decree, that the Church "has never ceased to lay down" this doctrine. He means, never since 1471!

Pope Alexander VII. then goes on to denounce anathemas against those "who try to RECALL INTO DISPUTE the same belief, festival, or worship." So it had been in dispute. This comes in very awkwardly in a decree which affirms that this belief had been always laid down, always held in the Church.

It was a hard case for poor Pope Pius IX. to find none of his predecessors that he could venture to quote in favour of the Immaculate Conception, until the year 1661!—only 193 years ago!—and then to have to quote what damages his case so much!

But what is wanting in proof in this decree, is well made up, for those who will swallow it, in confident and blustering assertions.

The decree then goes on to claim the Council of Trent as establishing the Immaculate Conception. We exposed this in our last number, p. 11, col 1, and we refer to it now; only observing here, that the very sentence of the Council of Trent which the Pope refers to, expressly confirms the decree of Pope Sixtus IV., which declares that the question "has not yet been decided by the Roman Church and the Apostolic See," "which constitution (says the Council of Trent) WE RENEW;"† and the Pope now appeals to the very sentence in which they say this, as their decision in favour of the Immaculate Conception!!

We have now examined all the authorities and proofs which are contained in the Pope's decree. The remainder of it is nothing but assertions.

He says, it is proved, by "illustrious monuments of a venerable antiquity," that this doctrine "always existed in the Church." But not one such document does he mention; and we venture to say, that no Roman Catholic will ever tell us the title of one of these documents, for the best of all reasons, that none such exist.

He says, it is the "clear, unanimous opinion" of the Fathers. But not one Father does he name; and it is enough for us to name St. Bernard in reply.

He speaks of the religious orders, without making any limitation or exception; and it is enough for us to name the Dominicans, though Pope Sixtus IV. would help us to many more.

He speaks of "the most eminent doctors of divinity;" and it is enough for us to name St. Thomas Aquinas and Cardinal Cajetan, out of a host that we could name.‡

He names no Father; but he says the Fathers beheld the Immaculate Conception "in the ark of Noah," in "Jacob's ladder," "in the Burning Bush," and many other like things: and if these things are, indeed, Scripture proofs of the Immaculate Conception, why did not the Church of

* Labbe and Cossart, vol. xii., 623. Ed. Paris. 1671.

† Session V. De Peccato Originali, at the end.

‡ See CATHOLIC LAYMAN, vol. iii., p. 131.

* 174th Epistle, tom. i., col. 393. Paris, 1839.

Rome put Noah's ark and Jacob's ladder into her prayers to the Immaculate Conception, instead of TRANSFERRING to the Conception of Mary what the Holy Spirit spake of the origin of the "Wisdom uncreated," the everlasting Son of God?

And, after all, the Pope goes on to say—"Wherefore, from the ancient times, the princes of the Church, ecclesiastics, and even emperors and kings themselves, have earnestly entreated of this apostolic see that the Immaculate Conception of the most holy mother of God should be defined as a dogma of Catholic faith;" and again—"We resolved that we should no longer delay to sanction and define, by our supreme authority, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin." And, in the name of goodness, if, as the Pope says, it was "revealed by God," and always held and believed in the Church, how comes it that it never till now was "a dogma of Catholic faith?"

One word more to show the practical object of this Papal decree. The Pope thus issues his command—"Let all the children of the Catholic Church, most dear to us, hear these our words; and, with a more ardent zeal of piety, religion, and love, proceed to worship, invoke, AND PRAY to the most blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, conceived without original sin."*

It has been usual, when Protestants have said that the Church of Rome teaches men "to worship" and "pray to" the Virgin, to hear this indignantly denied. But now it is absolutely COMMANDED, by what professes to be the infallible authority of the Church of Rome.

Let those look to it who have hitherto denied that their Church teaches this idolatry; and let them hear the warning voice that comes from heaven—"Go out from her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins."—Apocalypse xviii. 4, Douay Bible.

The Pope concludes his decree with a threat, which becomes the less terrible the more it is considered. "Let no man interfere with this our declaration, pronouncement, and definition, or oppose and contradict it with presumptuous rashness. If any should presume to assail it, let him know that he will incur the indignation of the omnipotent God, and of his blessed Apostles Peter and Paul." As if the Pope had in his hand the indignation of Almighty God and the apostles to bestow it upon whom he would!

How would Popes John X., John XI., John XII., Pope Lando, and many others, have bestowed that indignation? Not surely upon adulterers or robbers.†

We trust that God Almighty still keeps his indignation in his own power, to be exercised on those alone "who love not the Gospel, and obey not the Lord Jesus Christ."

But where did Popes get this power, or from whom did they learn these mighty threats? That shall be told. Pope Nicholas I., the man who imposed the forged decretal epistles of the Popes upon the Church, in the ninth century, that was the man who first took into his own hands "the indignation of Almighty God and the chief of the Apostles."‡ And if our readers will look back to our number for February, 1854, p. 16, col. 3, under the heading, "Popes' Power of Condemning to Hell," they will find Pope Nicholas's authority for assuming a power until that time unknown in the Church. And from that time forward Popes have enforced their decrees by such threats as Pope Pius now uses—on the authority of forgery alone!

We commend it to our readers to consider whether this present decree of the Pope is to be

received as the decision of an infallible authority instituted by God in His Church—whether the act by which the Virgin Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother is to be henceforward "the true object of devotion" to the Catholic Church—whether the Virgin herself is to be "worshipped" and "prayed to" by Catholics.

RECENT CONTROVERSY AT BOULOGNE.

(Continued from page 10.)

You cite the case of the Asiatic Churches as celebrating Easter contrary to the Roman custom, and say that Victor, Bishop of Rome, excommunicated them. This proves him to have been, as he was then held to be, a hot, imperious, and meddling man. But why did you not assert the only thing pertinent to your case—namely, that these Churches of Asia recognised his authority and yielded? Simply, because instead of submitting, they disclaimed it, and continued to observe their own day of celebrating Easter, notwithstanding his attempted interference.

This case will show how carelessly assertions are made in support of Roman Catholic claims. It is perfectly notorious that the Eastern Churches refused to adopt the custom of the west, and followed their own mode of Paschal observance for more than a century and a quarter after Victor's unauthorized interference. The Council of Nice decided the time of celebration. On this Pontiff's attempt he was admonished by several bishops, amongst the rest by Irenæus. Eusebius states that Victor's attempt was displeasing to many who spoke strongly to him. Irenæus uses very decided language. He says, the Apostles commanded not to judge others in matters of meat or drink, and, very pertinently to the point, *ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς* (in the matter of a festival). The fragment of this letter which is preserved, as well as the history of this whole controversy, is decisive testimony against the authority of the Roman See. It is perfectly certain that the attempt of the Pontiff to interfere with the liberties of the Asiatic Churches was, in this, as in other cases, summarily disallowed. The eastern mode of celebrating Easter was persevered in until the Council of Nice, notwithstanding Victor's disapproval.*

You next adduce the instance of Cyprian, and assert that when a council of sixty-six African bishops decided that the children of heretics should be rebaptized, the Roman Pontiff Stephen threatened them with excommunication, and that Cyprian, "great man as he was," was obliged to bend.

Now, the facts of the case are directly the reverse. The African bishops, with Cyprian at their head, were so far from bending before Stephen, that they re-affirmed, in most emphatic terms, their former decision, notwithstanding his condemnation of it. Two Carthaginian Councils had already pronounced a doctrine differing from that of Rome. The second of these, by a synodical letter, informed the Pontiff of its decision. Stephen haughtily disapproved. Strong letters passed between him and Cyprian. The Roman bishop broke off all communication with these opposing Africans. But so far were they from being intimidated thereat, and yielding, that in a third Council of Carthage (256) they repeated their former judgment. Peace ensued on Stephen's death. But the Africans maintained their own doctrine; and, so far down as the fourth century, the opinion of the Greek Fathers was in accordance with that of those Carthaginian Councils.†

[Repetition of assertion naturally tends to secure its acceptance. The Church of Rome makes powerful use of the fact to the furtherance (and to the discredit) of its cause. The amount to which historic truth has been perverted by its advocates is most lamentable and wicked. A good cause rejects such defences, but the exigencies of inveterate error force it to expedients which are its refutation and its shame. We speak of those who, knowing the fraud, or having reason to suspect it, persevere in using or in countenancing it. The present instance is one to the point. Father Lacordaire (whose works, according to my opponents, have received the sanction of the Catholic Church), with others, asserts that Cyprian yielded in this matter to Pope Stephen. The simple account of the transaction, the continuance of the Eastern view until long after Stephen, sufficiently refute the statement. Nothing can be clearer than that the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff was not for a moment admitted—nay, that it was peremptorily rejected. And, as to his infallibility, let Cyprian testify to his view of it. He says—"In tantum Stephani fratris nostri obstinatio dura prorupit, ut etiam de Marcionis baptismo, item Valentini, et Apelletis, et cæterorum blasphemantium in Deum patrem contendat

filios deo nasci." Here the African Father speaks of the "unbending obstinacy" of the Pontiff; charges him with holding those to be regenerate who speak evil (blasphemy) against God the Father; he describes the same Pontiff as having written rashly, and without forethought, things haughty, irrelevant, and contradictory. And when Stephen urges Roman tradition, the steadfast African rejects it in terms, which (notwithstanding Cyprian's hierarchical notions) are especially adverse to the Romish cause. His words are—"How great is that obstinacy, how great that presumption, which prefers human tradition to divine injunction, and perceives not that God is indignant as often as human tradition sets at nought and neglects the divine commands. Custom which has crept in among some *un-awares* (a home thrust) ought not to hinder truth from prevailing and triumphing; for (the aphorism is well worth recording) custom without truth is only error inveterate." He then finely adds—"It is no more beneath the dignity of a Roman bishop than of any other man to suffer himself to be corrected when he is in the wrong; for the bishop ought not only to teach but to learn; for he becomes even the better teacher, who is daily adding to his knowledge and making progress by the correction of his errors."

Such is the witness of Cyprian to pontifical infallibility and jurisdiction over the whole Church of Christ. But in order to show how utterly untrue it is to affirm of Cyprian and the African Church that they yielded to Stephen (whom they so resolutely and successfully opposed) in this matter of baptism, we shall mention some contemporary events.

Firmilian, Bishop of Casarea, in Cappadocia, upon learning the opposition made to the Roman Pontiff by Cyprian and the African Church, wrote, assuring them of the full approbation of the Churches of his province. Dionysius, of Alexandria, likewise condemned the conduct of the Pontiff. The letter of the former, extant in 26 Cod., is so strikingly adverse to Romish pretensions, that it was purposely omitted in the Ed. of Cyp., Rom. ap. Paul Manutium, 1563.

Firmilian speaks of Stephen's "boldness and insolence," of his "open and manifest folly," of the strifes and dissensions which he had caused in the Churches. And, then, in reference to his attempted excommunication of the African Church, apostrophising the Pope, uses the following language:—"Thou hast cut off thyself. Be not deceived. He is truly the schismatic who has made himself an apostate from the communion of ecclesiastical unity." Pretty strong terms these in which to speak of the Pope, and fully sufficient to show how entirely unknown in those days had been the modern claims of Papal infallibility and jurisdiction.

In order to leave no doubt that the assertion of Cyprian's deference to the Roman Pontiff in this matter is wholly at variance with truth, let us take the testimony of the celebrated Roman Catholic historian, Dupin. Having given the same account of the controversy between Stephen and Cyprian which I have given, and spoken strongly of the unchristian conduct of the Pontiff, he says—"It is certain that St. Cyprian never altered his opinion; that the Greek Churches were, for a long time after him, divided upon this question; that the Council of Arles first decided it in the west, &c."

The next argument from Cyprian is founded upon the words—"Primacy was given to Peter to show that there is but one Church, and one Chair—does he who abandons the Chair of Peter, upon which the Church is founded, flatter himself that he is in the Church?"

Whatever meaning we may give to these words, supposing them to be genuine, it is certain you cannot deduce from them that Cyprian believed in the infallibility or supremacy of the Roman Pontiff, because he had, as we have seen, in conjunction with the Council of Carthage, determined and successfully opposed him. Cyprian held high views of the Church order and unity. He supposed bishops to be successors of the Apostles. Of the last he says—"They were all, in common with Peter, possessed of like power and authority." His words here are express. Bishops, their successors, were, in like manner, all equal. "Christ," he says, "to mark the unity of his Church, mentions one among these equals by name, Peter." It was to mark or indicate unity, but not to localize it at Rome, that, in Cyprian's view, Christ made mention of one—i.e., Peter. Unity did not consist in the subordination of all Churches to one visible head, resident at Rome, but in the communion of each Church with all the others. He was as truly a schismatic who separated from the See of Carthage as he who broke communion with Rome. Cyprian's idea of unity was what Firmilian expressed when, in writing to him, he describes—in reference to Pope Stephen—the true schismatic to be the one who, by breaking the general union among Churches, separated himself from "the communion of ecclesiastical (not pontifical) unity."

[So far as this passage is concerned, we need not dwell upon it further than to notice it as another instance of the imposition practised on the too confiding members of the Church of Rome. The former statement contradicted history, and was untrue in point of fact. This statement is a fraud, for it is an interpolation on the works of Cyprian. The genuine passage is as follows (I mark, by brackets, the Romish interpolations):—"Et quamvis apostolis omnibus post resurrectionem suam parum potestatem tribuit, et dicit, 'Sicut misit me pater,' &c., tamen ut unitatem manifestaret [unam cathedram constituit et] unitatis ejusdem originem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate dis-

* The Latin is, "Colere, invocare, exorare beatissimam Dei genetricem, &c." The translation is the *Tablet's*, not yours.

† See our article in this number, p. 15.

‡ Ep. xxx. ad Carolum Calvum Regem.—Labbe and Costart, vol. viii., 410. Ed. Paris, 1671.

* The Paschal controversy contains ample evidence against the usurpations of the Romish See, and is a most unfortunate case for its advocates to adduce. They bring it forward solely because it shows some cases of interference on the part of the Pontiff; but they suppress the fact, that such interference was rejected. It is well-known matter of history that the ancient British and Irish Churches, observing their own mode of celebrating Easter, refused conformance to the Roman method, and persevered in their opposition, and proved their independence, notwithstanding the attempts of the See of Rome upon their liberties. Baronius confesses that the early Irish Church was treated by the Church of Rome as schismatical up to the sixth century.

† And (as it is highly pertinent to observe) an intermediate opinion, which afterwards became the prevailing one, arose in the Western Church itself.